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Foreword

We would like to welcome you to 2012 UAD TEFL International Conference “New Paradigms in Teaching English as a Foreign Language”, the second conference on Teaching English as a Foreign Language held by English Education Department University of Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta. It is an exciting time to be involved in the world of TEFL in Indonesia as the area of discussion is getting larger and more dynamic. This year, the conference attracts more people both as presenters or participants, coming from national and international institutions. This has been reflected in the record number of abstract submissions received for UAD TEFL International Conference: 120 in total. This is an extremely time consuming and energy demanding process and we are grateful to the reviewers for all their work. At the review meeting 100 abstracts were accepted for parallel presentation session. However, among these abstracts senders, not all of them submitted their full paper version up to the deadline, so, there are 62 out of 100 papers which are made available in the conference proceedings.

We would like to thank Dr.Dat Bao of Monash University, Australia; Dr. Shaik Abdul Malik Mohamed Ismail of University Sains Malaysia, Malaysia; Professor Bustami Subhan, M.S. and Drs. Surono, M.Hum of University of Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia, for their help, and guidance during the reviewing and editing processes. It's a privilege for us to have them as the board of the reviewers for the conference proceedings. In addition, we would also like to appreciate many people who have helped in preparing and organizing the conference including preparing the printed proceedings.

The absence of the guidelines of this publication has caused to different types of paper styles. While most of the papers in this publication follow the regular standards of academic writing – including abstract, keywords and references -, there are few of them do not. We keep them as what they are.

We hope that you enjoy reading the conference proceedings and find it an inspiring and enlightening one.

Editors

Yogyakarta, October 2012

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Utilizing Visual Literacy in Teaching English as a Foreign Language for University Students

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Abstract

In this sophisticated era where there are a lot of technologies that can be utilized and used to support the teaching and learning process, it is the time for teachers to be more creative and to make use of the visual literacy by using the available media and technology. In this paper, the writer discusses an idea of utilizing visual literacy in the teaching of English as a foreign language for university students. Simple everyday things can be turned into visual literacy material in the classroom, for instance, the book covers, advertisements, pamphlets, comics, newspapers, films, animations and even students' personal photographs (Bamford, 2003). Utilizing visual literacy at the university classroom can help the students learn the language faster than just merely using texts available on the textbooks or the module for the teaching.

Keywords: Visual literacy and English as foreign language.

Introduction

Literacy is the ability to read for the purpose of discerning information from the written words. Then visual literacy means the ability to read visual images for the purpose of discerning information. In the past, the literacy was the privilege that only some people can have, not as what everyone has today where most people has the ability to read and write.

In its relation to the field of teaching and learning, visual learning has been used for a long period of time such in reading where the text accompanied by pictures and images, but these are mostly can only be found on textbooks published for young learners. There are only few textbooks found for older learners such as university students that have more pictures and images. While, as stated by Professor Albert Mehrabian in Ferguson (2009), 55% of the information we take in is visual and only 7% is text during a presentation. In addition, in this sophisticated era where information can be presented through various kinds of media and there are a lot of technologies that can be utilized and supported teaching and learning process, it is time for teachers to be more creative and be able to make use of the technology such as video/DVD, digital images, web-based texts, photographs or images and sounds.

Visual literacy which is described by Golubieskiin Pranayama (2006) as an understanding and critical analysis of all visual imagery presented to the individual in a culture, can be one of the ways to beuse for the teaching and learning process. Examples of visual literacy include the use of photos, pictorial and simple graphic symbols and signs, and film. Those visual images can be used inside and outside the classroom especially in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language for university students. In this paper, the writer will discuss about utilizing visual literacy in teaching English as a foreign language to university students.

Definition of Visual Literacy

A definition of visual literacy was first offered by John Debes in 1969, one of the most important figures in the history of the International Visual Literacy Association. Debes in the website of International Visual Literacy Association defines visual literacy as:

...a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences. The development of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning. When developed, they enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, symbols, natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environment. Through the creative use of these competencies, he is able to communicate with others. Through the appreciative use of

these competencies, he is able to comprehend and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication.

In simple, Wileman (1993) defined visual literacy as “the ability to ‘read,’ interpret, and understand information presented in pictorial or graphic images”. Similarly, Heinich, Molenda, Russell, & Smaldino (1999) also state that visual literacy is the learned ability to interpret visual messages accurately and to create such messages. In addition, Dale (2009) defines visual literacy, simply as one’s ability to fully understand the images that they receive in daily life. In further, Ferguson (2009) defined visual literacy as the ability to interpret, use, appreciate, and create images and video using both conventional and 21st century media in ways that advance thinking, decision making, communication, and learning.

From the definitions above, it can be inferred that visual literacy is related to the ability that someone has in digesting information taken from various media in the form of pictures and images which can be used in the teaching and learning process. This visual literacy has many parts and visually literate person must be able to read and write visual language.

The other definition of visual literacy is from Leschak (2009), who states that visual literacy is the ability to understand communications composed of visual images as well as being able to use visual imagery to communicate to others. Visual images are fast becoming the most predominant form of communication. White (2008) agrees with this and mentions that visual literacy includes such areas as facial expressions, body language, drawing, painting, sculpture, hand signs, street signs, international symbols, layout of the pictures and words in a textbook, the clarity of type fonts, computer images, pupils producing still pictures, sequences, movies or video, user-friendly equipment design and critical analysis of television advertisements.

From Leschak (2009) and White (2008), it can be inferred that visual literacy is related to understanding communication ability and being able to use visual imagery in communication. Visual literacy is wider and even covers the street signs and international symbols, still and moving images.

Types of Visual and Visual Literacy

Visual defined earlier as visible and relating to and using sight. Clark and Lyons in Smaldino, Lowther and Russell (2008) mention that visual can be divided into six categories; realistic, analogical, organizational, relational, transformational and interpretive. The first, realistic visuals show the actual object under study for example the color photograph of a car. Using natural color can heighten the degree of realism and under circumstances; it can actually interfere with communication and learning. The second, analogical visuals convey a concept or topic by showing something else and implying a similarity for instance an analogy of queue students in front of the classroom before they enter the class might be the ants on their journey to the nest. The third, organizational visuals show the qualitative relationship among various elements such classification chart, timelines, flowcharts and maps. The fifth, relational visual communicate quantitative relationships. The examples are bar charts, pictorial graphs, pie charts and line graphs. The last one, transformational visuals illustrate movement or change in time and space. The examples can be an animated diagram of how to perform a procedure such as a line drawing with movement indicator and or an animation of water cycle. Those all are the types of visual. It is a little bit different from the types of visual literacy.

Visual literacy as the ability to understand, create, and use visual images has three parts. They are visual thinking, visual communication and visual learning (Kovalik and King, 2009). The first one, visual thinking is the ability to transform thoughts, ideas, and information into all types of pictures, graphics, or other images that help communicate the associated information. The second one, visual communication is when pictures, graphics, and other images are used to express ideas and to teach people. For visual communication to be effective, the receiver must be able to construct meaning from seeing the visual image. The third one, visual learning is the process of learning from pictures and media. Visual learning includes the construction of knowledge by the learner as a result of seeing the visual images.

The Roles of Visual and Visual Literacy

Visual literacy can play many possible roles in teaching and learning process in the classroom. The roles are to provide a concrete referent for ideas, make abstract ideas concrete, motivate learners, draw learner attention (direct attention), repeat information in different format, recall prior learning and reduce learning effort (Smaldino, Lowther and Russell, 2008).

The first role, providing a concrete reference for ideas means visuals are iconic - having some resemblance to the things they represent - and they serve as a more easily remembered link to the original idea. The teacher can make use of visuals to help students more easily remember the content being taught. The second role, making abstract ideas concrete means that something abstract such as the word freedom can be made concrete by showing the students a picture of people voting in an election. The third role, motivating learners means enhancing their eagerness to study and this can be done by using visuals. Visual literacy can motivate learners by attracting their attention, holding their attention, and generating engagement in the learning process. In addition they also draw on learners' personal interests to make the instruction relevant. The fourth role, directing attention means using, for example the visual pointer, which can draw learner attention and thinking to the relevant parts of a visual. In addition it also can be used to focus attention to points of important within complex visual content (Jeng, Chandler, & Sweller in Smaldino, Lowther and Russell, 2008). The fifth role, repeating information means when visuals accompany spoken or written information, they represent that information in a different modality, giving some learners a chance to comprehend visually what they might miss in text format. The sixth role, recalling prior learning means activating prior knowledge stored in long-term memory. Visuals can also be used to summarize the content from lesson at the end of a meeting and or to activate the learner memory at the beginning of a lesson of the previous material they have learnt. The last role, reducing learning effort means visual can simplify information that is difficult to understand by turning it into diagram, timelines or flowchart, etc. Teachers can convey their messages in such a way that students expend little effort making sense out of what they are seeing and are free to use most of their mental effort for understanding the message itself.

From the various roles of visual above, it can be concluded that visuals are very useful and there are several of them all around us that can be made use of and take advantage of. The key to this is by enhancing the teachers' sense of creativity. Visuals are open widely to be explored in language teaching and learning. The visual that can be used in this way are called visual learning.

Visual learning is one part of visual literacy that has been known by educator in language teaching for years especially in teaching reading. Picture books that place the word "apple" next to the picture of an apple help students to develop the concept of written language. They learn to read using pictures. Most of teachers probably have known the importance of visual thinking and visual learning as they train their students to read at elementary or secondary education, but the upper grades such as university students might not yet being exposed to the use of visual learning tools extensively. This is in line to what stated by Kress & van Leeuwen in Roberston (2007) that although elementary-school texts are richly illustrated, as students progress into secondary school, visual images become fewer, with a greater proportion of materials being alphabetic text.

Graphic organizers, pictures, videos, and computers can all aid in instruction in most all disciplines moreover in English language teaching and learning. It cannot be denied that utilizing visual literacy can enhance students learning since it is more interesting and can convey meaning faster than just merely a stretch of words on a paper. The images in visual literacy materials are more attractive and eye catcher.

In addition, in the last decade new media has led to an explosion of visual culture and experiences. Images today have become the dominant form of communication, telling everything from how one should look, to where to line up, to what to buy, and even what should be thought of (Lund and Poole, 2008). A visually literate person should be able to read and write visual language. Similarly, Bamford (2003) mentions that *"to be an effective communicator in today's world, a person needs to be able to interpret, create and select images to convey a range of meanings"*. Then, it can be concluded that the roles of visual literacy is important in everyday communication and that also means it is important to be included in the process of teaching and learning a language especially English as a foreign language context.

Utilizing Visual Literacy in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Classroom at University

It has been mentioned earlier that visual literacy consists of three parts that are visual thinking, visual learning and visual communication. In relation to the context of English as a foreign language where English is not use in everyday communication and not uses as the medium instruction in the formal education, utilizing visual literacy at the university classroom can help the students learn the language faster than just merely using texts available on the textbooks or the module for the teaching. It does need teacher creativity and efforts to make it come true and also need an appropriate approach. There are two major approaches that can be used by teachers for developing visual literacy skills (Heinich as cited in Stokes, 2004). The first is to help learners read or decode visuals through practicing analysis techniques. Decoding involves interpreting and creating meaning from visual stimuli. The second is to help learners write or encode visual as a tool for communication. Students develop their visual abilities through use.

Similarly, Smaldino, Lowther and Russell (2008) propose two major approaches through which visual literacy can be develop. The two approaches are input strategies and output strategies. Input strategies means helping learners to decode or read visuals proficiently by practicing visual analysis skills, for instances through picture analysis and discussion of multimedia and video programs. Meanwhile output strategies means helping learners to encode or write visuals to express themselves and communicate with others, for examples through planning and producing visual presentations. In addition, simple everyday things can be turn into visual literacy material in the classroom, for instance, the book covers, advertisements, pamphlets, comics, newspapers, films, animations and even students' personal photographs (Bamford, 2003).

Some fun activities for bringing up visual literacy into the classroom teaching at university level students could include: (1) showing the pictures of the students' faces and interpreting the emotion being displayed, (2) showing the pictures of places of interest in the city or in the world for example the seven wonders of the world, (3) creating visual dictionaries in which for each letter choose stereotypical images and unusual non- stereotypical images from magazines, newspapers, and brochures or online. (4) videoing the students activities in their every day life and or their vacation activities, (5) looking at the book covers, brochures or pamphlets the student bring to the classroom with them and talk about which one is more interesting to read from the lay out, the text types used and or the language.

Those activities can be utilized in any four language skills classroom such as reading, listening, speaking and writing and or in an integrated skills classroom. When talking about images that are part of visual literacy, the following table may be useful:

Table 1:
Aspect of Visual Literacy to be discussed in a Classroom

Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What issues are being shown in the images? • How is the way the issues is shown in the image similar to or different from how you see this issues in the world? • What might the image mean to someone who sees it? • What is the message of the images?
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where has the information in the images come from? • What information has been included and what information has been left out? • What proportion of the image could be inaccurate? • What information presented is factual/manipulated/framed? • What is the relationship between the image and any text? • What impact does the size of images within the picture have?
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What people are depicted in the image (even if there are now actual people in the image, whose culture or experiences are being shown)? • Who created the images and for what purpose? • Who is intended audience for the image? • Whose point of view does the image take?

Persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why has a certain media been chosen? • Why was a particular image chosen? • Why was the image arranged that way? • Is the information contained in the image factual? • What devices have been used to get the message across to the viewer? • How has the message been affected by what has been left out or is not shown?
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What attitudes are assumed? • Whose voice is heard? • Whose voice is not heard? • What experiences or points of view are assumed?

Taken from Bamford (2003)

The five components above can be used, for instance, in a speaking classroom where the aims are enabling students to communicate in English. The lessons can be carried out in the form of group or class discussion and presentation by pair or group of students. It can also be made into a project which is assigned a week before the next meeting. This is line to the output strategies proposed by Smaldino, Lowther and Russell mentioned above. In further, the use of relevant images will be even more successful because they can stimulate classroom discussion and motivate students' interest. The following ideas developed from White (2008) can be tried out to get visual literacy started in a classroom at university level in Indonesian especially at the English Language departments;

- 1). *Personal photograph*. A teacher can use his/her personal photographs that are memorable and shares them with students. When the teacher shares them with students, it can be considered as modeling for the students. Then the teacher can ask the students to do the same thing individually or working in group.
- 2). *Unique and heartwarming pictures*. Unique and heartwarming pictures (taken from internet) can be used as material for discussion. The pictures can be found by the teacher or the students. Various heartwarming pictures with various theme such as humanity, war, global warming, life struggling or pictures of natural disaster for instance the one that had just happened in West Sumatera or in Bengkulu in 2007 can be brought into the classroom and do discussion on that pictures and taking moral values from them.
- 3). *Songs with images (from Youtube)*. Youtube website (www.youtube.com) has various songs with various themes from all over the world. The writer suggests using the song from this site because it is in the form of moving images or video. The moving images with the song in the video can help the students understand them better and can be an interesting material for discussion as well as developing the students listening skill. The teacher can choose the songs which are the most suitable with the students ability and contain images that increasing motivation.
- 4). *Films and television images*. Film and television images can be utilized in the classroom similar to the use of songs with image above. The film can be the most favorite, the current film that contain educational value such as "Laskar Pelangi" or the sequel "Sang Pemimpi". While from the television, it can be the talk show program such as "the Oprah Winfrey" and or the shows about animals or natural things such as "Wild Wild World" or the shows on traveling or cooking in English language.
- 5). *Still and Moving Advertisements*. The moving advertisements which are available on TV can be recorded and brought to the classroom, then do discussion on for instance, the effect of the advertisement to the audience. The still advertisement from pamphlet, newspapers or magazines can also be utilized in the same way.
- 6). *Poems, Sound and Pictures*. Students can explore the connection between sounds and images and develop pictures from them. In this part, the teacher can use poems and then reading it to the classroom. After that ask the students to draw a representation of the poems. This idea can be done individually, in group or as a whole class activity. The poems can be utilized in courses such as introduction to literature or in listening, reading, speaking and writing course.

The other ways of utilizing visual literacy in the university classroom is through making use of and taking advantage from Microsoft power point either by the teacher or by the students. Teacher can use power point for any courses but for the students especially the English department students, the use of power point for a language teaching seminar course and language teaching research course would be a great idea since here, the students who will do the presentation to their classmates in the classroom. In addition, this way can be useful for the students at the end of their study where they will have to have seminars for their final project proposal and the result. Microsoft power point can be exploited to the maximum use by considering the fonts, the colors and the graphic of the slide presentation. Ferguson (2009) suggest that in presenting material by using power point, the presenter should consider the use of the appropriate fonts, the colors and the graphic. For the fonts, they should complement the presentation but never bring undue attention to it or be difficult to read. The use of the Verdana, Tahoma and Bookman is a good idea since they do designed especially for online viewing; meanwhile the use of Times is not a wise choice for projected materials. Before bringing the slides in front of the audience, it is suggested to check font by standing 10 feet from computer screen to make sure it is visible. The font's minimum size for the titles and headlines are 44 point and maximum 54 points, meanwhile for the body text, 24 minimum and 32 is maximum. Consistent use of fonts is important to consistently presenting the material to the audience.

In relation to color use, Ferguson (2009) states that color call to mind specific emotional responses, adding a highlight color increases comprehension and recall, warm colors are attractive and exciting and cool colors are passive and calming. In addition, Ferguson also states that presenters are suggested to use contrasting colors, light colors should appear on darker colors and vice versa and never use blues and reds together because these colors blur when projected and cause eyestrain. One of the best color schemes is dark blue background with white text and use yellow for the highlight color because they are very pleasing to the eye and projects wonderfully.

Moreover, for the graphic use, Ferguson (2009) states that graphics are a great way to spark ideas and communication within a presentation. This is the visual bridge to understanding the subject matter presented. Abstract graphics such as line arts and clip art are a good start. For deeper connection and understanding, use photos or pictures. The graphics should not distract the viewer from the intended message, complement and help the viewer make a desired connection to text or subject. Too much movement in transitions and animations become tiring to the eye and distracting audience attention.

Utilizing visual literacy mentioned above needs careful plan, creativity and some efforts from both the teachers and the students. It is true that the use of visual in education helps learners but misuse and overuse can also bring to the wrong tract in learning as stated by Sherry in Stokes (2004) that the use of visuals that steer the learner to the exciting or entertaining aspects of presentation rather than encouraging thoughtful analysis of the underlying meaning may interfere with the intent of the lesson. So, in utilizing the visual literacy, the teachers need to be wise in choosing the materials, in seeing the benefit of the materials and considering the effect of them to the success of the teaching and the learning itself.

Conclusion

Visual literacy which is defined as the ability to read, interpret, and understand information presented in pictorial or graphic images has been used for a long time especially in the part of visual learning. This can be seen in the textbooks for elementary or secondary school, but very few found on the advance level students such as university students. Along with the great roles of technology in everyday life of today's people, it can be used in the field of teaching and learning as well, such as in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language at university classroom. In this context, visual literacy can be utilized by bringing it up in the four skills course and others by discussion (in pair, group and or class), by using the ideas propose above and by doing presentation by the teacher and or by the students. The courses such as language teaching seminar, introduction to linguistics and language teaching research at the English department will be great classrooms to utilize visual literacy with some efforts, creativity and careful plan from the teachers and so does the students.

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